

Green Street Gallery/Boston, MA

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ROBIN MANDEL: SCULPTURE



Robin Mandel, *Royal Pain*, kinetic sculpture, 2005.

real and metaphoric permutations. *Nights and Weekends* (2004) is one of the real stunners of the show. An irresistible metal switch positioned on a moving box activates the sculpture, which features a pair of mechanically toasting wine glasses that in turn, like a marionette, effect the pulling of a pair of metal cables causing a spray bottle to jettison a squirt of water onto a heated iron, which almost sinisterly hisses in reply.

Toasting and ironing may be worlds apart, but the social chasm between the two is of course dramatically narrowed in domestic life. Mandel's best work dramatically demonstrates this interconnectedness, the cause-and-effect dynamic, the very "mechanism" of human interaction that underlies all relationships.

In *Royal Pain* (2005) a little girl's shoe taps incessantly while a silver crown positioned in the center of a thronelike chair rotates, causing a bright red axe to scrape along in and out of the notches of the crown, continuously rising and falling with a clang. While the crown is the natural symbol of power, it is here reduced to little more than a glorified gear in a larger machine. It is difficult to say which is the pain—the girl, the axe, or the position of power itself. *Jonathan Fardy*